Program Description

Out of Many: Religious Pluralism in America
An NEH Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges Program
Spring 2012 – Fall 2013

From its founding, the United States has been characterized by profound religious diversity. At the time of the Constitution’s ratification in 1788, the new nation already included Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Muslims, and countless indigenous faiths. It was this diversity that in many ways informed Article VI’s prohibition on religious tests for public office. A citizen’s character and capabilities, rather than their religious faith, was to constitute the qualifications for public service. Yet not everyone benefited equally from this ideal of religious freedom. In practice, most state constitutions supported only certain Protestant sects, and many considered Native American religious practices uncivilized. Most Muslims came to the new world as slaves. And some nationalist discourses imagined the United States as a Christian nation or even as a new promised land for a newly chosen people.

This important tension between ideal and practice—the ideal of a nation of many peoples of many faiths and the real conflicts that religious diversity often generates—has animated much of America’s history. From the country’s founding documents through the conflict over whether to build an Islamic Community Center near Ground Zero, the United States repeatedly has encountered moments during which its commitment to religious freedom clashed with social, cultural, and economic realities. In every instance, America’s diverse religious peoples continually tested the nation’s declared commitment to religious freedom. “Out of many,” as America’s seal proclaims, there has emerged a shared, if contested, legacy of religious pluralism.

The Newberry Library invites applications from teams of community college faculty members with sponsoring administrators from the same campus or system to participate in “Out of Many: Religious Pluralism in America,” an NEH Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges Program focused on original research and curriculum development. “Out of Many” will provide community college faculty with the knowledge and resources with which to modify existing curriculum or design new courses to integrate key episodes from America’s past and present that relate to religious pluralism. From the Spring of 2012 through the Fall of 2013, selected faculty and administrators will work with project staff and prominent humanities scholars to explore America’s religious pluralism, conduct research in the Newberry’s collections, develop digitized teaching resources on the study of American religion, and contribute to a website on religious pluralism that will serve as an enduring resource for teachers everywhere.

Project Staff

Daniel Greene, Project Co-Director and Vice President of Research and Academic Programs, Newberry Library. Greene is a U.S. historian who specializes in ethnicity, pluralism, and American identity. His book is The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity (Indiana University Press, 2011). Before coming to the Newberry, he was a historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
in Washington, DC. Greene is an affiliated faculty member of the history department at the University of Illinois Chicago. He earned his PhD in history at the University of Chicago.

Chris Cantwell, Project Co-Director and Assistant Director, Scholl Center, Newberry Library. A U.S. historian who specializes in religion, politics, and social life, Cantwell is currently at work on a book on rise of evangelicalism in American politics titled “The Bible Class Teacher: Piety and Politics in the Age of Fundamentalism.” Before joining the Newberry, Cantwell taught American history at Cornell University, DePaul University, and the New York Council for the Humanities. He received his PhD in history from Cornell University.

Liesl Olson, Director, Scholl Center, Newberry Library. Olson is a literary scholar who taught at the University of Chicago as a Harper-Schmidt Fellow, and served as an NEH/Mellon Foundation Fellow, before joining the Newberry. Her first book, Modernism and the Ordinary (Oxford University Press, 2009), examines a broad range of twentieth-century writers and how their works present the habitual and unselfconscious actions of everyday life. She is currently writing a book about Chicago’s literary and cultural centrality during the early twentieth century.

Visiting Scholars

Martin E. Marty is the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of the History of Modern Christianity at the University of Chicago Divinity School. One of the most prolific and accomplished scholars of American religious history, Marty has authored over fifty books, including the three-volume Modern American Religion series with the University of Chicago Press, and, more recently, The One and the Many: America’s Struggle for the Common Good (Harvard University Press, 1997). A prominent public intellectual as well, Marty regularly writes for a broader audience through the Christian Century magazine and will discuss religious pluralism both as a historical reality and a civic ideal. He is also an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Diana L. Eck is a Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies and Frederic Wertham Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society at the Harvard University Divinity School. A scholar of Hinduism, Eck has published widely on sacred spaces and devotional practices in modern India. She is also the founder and director of Harvard’s Pluralism Project, a pioneering program devoted to exploring America’s multi-religious landscape. Her CD-ROM On Common Ground: World Religions in America (1997) is a model digital resource for teaching religious pluralism, and was awarded the National Humanities Award by President Bill Clinton. Eck remains both a scholar and an advocate for the study of religious pluralism in America, serving as Chair of the National Council of Churches’ Interfaith Relations Commission, and publishing more recently A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” Has Become the World’s Most Religious Diverse Nation (HarperOne, 2002).

Tisa Wenger is an Assistant Professor of Religion at Yale University Divinity School where she teaches Native American religious history and religion in the American West. Her work explores the ways in which conflicts over religious rights define both freedom and religion. Her first book, We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom (University of North Carolina Press, 2009) shows how dominant conceptions of religious freedom affected New Mexico’s Pueblo Indians as they sought to protect their religious ceremonies from government suppression, and how that struggle helped reshape mainstream views of religion. Wenger is currently researching a project on the unintended consequences of the ideal of religious freedom in Indian affairs.

Kevin Schultz is an Assistant Professor of History and Catholic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he researches the history of conceptions of America as a “Judeo-Christian Nation.” His first book, Tri-Faith America: How Postwar Catholics and Jews Helped America Realize its Protestant Promise (Oxford University Press, 2011) explored the work of American interfaith alliances after World War II. His teaching
and research also touches on matters of church and state, such as attempts to put questions on religion in the U.S. census and the role of religion in public schooling.

Aziz Huq is an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Chicago Law School where he teaches Constitutional law. Prior to beginning his teaching career, Huq clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He has written and spoken extensively on Constitutional rights in an age of counterterrorism, as well as on the religious rights of American Muslims in a post-9/11 world. His work has appeared in the Supreme Court Review, the Harvard Law Review, and in the New York Times, where he recently wrote an op-ed piece on the attempts by state legislatures to ban Sharia Law.

Project Schedule
“Out of Many” will run from the Spring Semester of 2012 through the Fall Semester of 2013, and will be based at the Newberry Library in Chicago. From June 25-29, 2012, participating faculty will work on site at the Newberry, attending seminars with prominent scholars of religion and researching in the library’s collections to design new curriculum on America’s religious pluralism. Participating faculty will then implement this new material into their classrooms during the 2012-2013 academic year, while also contributing to a group blog moderated by project staff and scholars. From June 26-28, 2013, participating faculty and their sponsoring administrators will return to the Newberry to finish their research and discuss potential campus programming on religious pluralism. In Fall 2013, faculty and sponsoring administrators will work with the project directors to implement these campus programs.

● Summer 2012:
During the mornings of the June 25-29, 2012 meetings, participating faculty will attend three-hour sessions led by the project directors and visiting scholars. These opening sessions will include both lectures and discussion on assigned readings.

  - On Monday, June 25, 2012, Project Directors Daniel Greene and Chris Cantwell will provide a broad overview of American religious history, focusing on the sources and contexts of its enduring diversity. This discussion will be followed by a focused seminar on the study of religious “pluralism” as a descriptive idiom, prescriptive ideal, and analytical category. In the afternoon, participating faculty will also be introduced to the Newberry’s many resources, and receive instructions on how to contribute to the program’s blog.
  - On Tuesday, June 26, 2012, visiting scholar Tisa Wenger will lead a seminar on the Pueblo dance controversies of the early twentieth century to demonstrate how the categorization of cultural and artistic practices as sacred shapes mainstream understandings of what is and is not “religious.” On Tuesday evening, participating faculty will attend an evening keynote address by Martin Marty, who will discuss the ways in which pluralism has served as the basis of America’s common ground for many religious and political individuals.
  - On Wednesday, June 27, 2012, Marty will continue to explore the themes of his evening lecture with participating faculty. Drawing from his The One and the Many, Marty will explore the how the interaction of religion and civility in American life has been a source of tension, as well as an opportunity for collaboration.
  - On Thursday, June 28, 2012, visiting scholar Kevin Schultz will shift our focus to religious pluralism’s political manifestations, discussing his work on the interfaith organizing efforts of the National Conference on Christians and Jews to instill religious diversity both in culture and in law after World War II.
  - On Friday, June 29, 2012, visiting scholar Aziz Huq continues this focus on church, state, and religious diversity in America, discussing the legal origins of religious freedom in the U.S. Constitution as well as the constitutional rights of religious minorities in a post-9/11 world, including the ongoing effort by many state legislatures to ban Sharia law.

After these morning sessions, faculty will then turn their attention to research and create new curriculum on religious pluralism using the Newberry’s collections. Potential topics for research include, but are not limited
4

to, the library’s strengths in the themes of conflict and conversion (Catholic Missions to North America, the Second Great Awakening, revivalism, missionary efforts abroad), religion and reform (abolitionism, the Social Gospel, rescue missions, utopian communities), interfaith dialogue (the World’s Parliament of Religions, freethought, spiritualism), church and state (the expulsion of the Mormons from Illinois, the religious dimensions of anti-Chinese immigration laws, religion in public education), and comparative studies (hymnody, Native American religions, American Judaism, Chicago’s religious history, religion in literature, church history, the influence of Eastern religions, Pentecostalism, Protestant theology).

Throughout their research, faculty will focus on creating a digital collection of primary sources based on their research and modeled on the Newberry’s “Digital Collection for Classroom Use.” Participants will have the opportunity to meet and discuss their collections with the project directors, Newberry staff, and visiting scholars throughout these afternoons. Project staff will also oversee the digitization of sources the faculty select, and will post these materials online for later use in the classroom. [A sample Digital Collection will be available soon.]

• 2012-2013 Academic Year
Over the course of the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013, faculty will then begin to implement the Digital Collections they created at the Newberry into their classes. Throughout the academic year, participants will also contribute to the program’s blog through assigned posts. Through the blog, faculty will be able to reflect upon their teaching experiences, receive feedback from their peers and project scholars, and continue to explore religious pluralism through readings and posted discussions with project staff and scholars.

• Summer 2013
From June 26-28, 2013, faculty teams will return to the Newberry along with sponsoring administrators for the project’s conclusion. Like the previous summer meeting, mornings will be given to seminar discussions and lectures, while the afternoons will be devoted to finishing the team’s Digital Collections.

• On Wednesday, June 26, 2013, Project Directors Daniel Greene and Chris Cantwell will lead a morning session reflecting on the cohort’s teaching experience over the previous year. Greene and Cantwell will also consult with participants on the creation of a permanent project website that will host the faculty teams’ Digital Collections and blog-posted teaching reflections. On Wednesday evening, participants will attend a public lecture by Diana Eck on her work with the Pluralism Project over the last decade.

• On Thursday, June 27, 2013, Eck will discuss her work with the Pluralism Project in even greater detail with the faculty teams, who will now be joined by their sponsoring administrators. In the seminar, Eck will focus on potential programs or events community college campuses or systems could organize to raise awareness and understanding of America’s religious diversity.

• On Friday, June 28, 2013, the program’s final day at the Newberry, faculty teams and their sponsoring administrators will gather to present their finished digital collections and consult with the Project Directors on what they would like to see in the “Out of Many” project website. Time will also be reserved for continued discussion on potential campus programming that focuses on religious pluralism.

• Fall 2013
Throughout the Fall of 2013, faculty teams and their sponsoring administrators will work with the project directors to plan and implement campus programming on religious pluralism. Faculty will also continue to consult in the creation of the “Out of Many” project website.

Facilities and Accommodations
The Newberry’s Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture will host this NEH Landmarks Workshop. Founded in 1971, the Scholl Center promotes research and teaching through the use of the Newberry’s rich collections and develops research, reference, and curriculum materials for scholars, teachers, and the public.
The Newberry Library is one of the nation’s premier independent research libraries located in the heart of Chicago’s “Gold Coast” neighborhood atop the Magnificent Mile, with access to all that the city has to offer. The library houses an extensive, non-circulating collection of rare books, maps, music, manuscripts, and other printed material related to the history of Western Europe and the Americas. The Newberry’s holdings in religion are a particular strength. In 2009, the library acquired more than 5,000 rare and important texts in American religious history from the McCormick Theological Seminary, and it has recently launched a five-year program to catalog over 8,000 titles in early modern religion through an initiative named in honor of Sister Ann Ida Gannon, a former president of Mundelein College and Newberry trustee. The Newberry’s holdings in American religious history include both print and manuscript sources that cover such diverse topics as records of Chicago-area churches, numerous denominational periodicals, published sermons from the Second Great Awakening, material from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints’ expulsion from Illinois, the annual reports of religious reform organizations, ethnographic material on indigenous religious practice, the records of Catholic missionaries to Native Americans, and the personal papers of prominent ministers and laymen. For a full description of the Newberry’s holdings see our collection guides, specifically the topical outline of our holdings in religion.

Participating faculty will not only have access to the Newberry’s extensive collections throughout the workshop, but will also receive extended reading hours, research space, and access to the library’s reference services.

**Transportation and Housing**

If you are coming to the Newberry from out of town, you can travel to Chicago via air or train. Both O’Hare International Airport and Midway Airport offer taxi and shuttle service to downtown Chicago. Chicago’s subway system (the "L") includes stops at O’Hare and Midway. O’Hare is at the end of the north branch of the Blue Line. Midway is at the end of the Orange Line. You can transfer from the Blue and Orange lines to other bus and train lines. For more information about the Chicago transit system, visit the Chicago Transit Authority’s [Trip Planner](#).

Amtrak trains also arrive at Union Station daily, and Metra, Chicago’s commuter rail system, brings trains into four major stations: Ogilvie Transportation Center, Millennium Station, LaSalle Street Station, and Union Station from as far as Kenosha, Wisconsin, and South Bend, Indiana.

Once you are in the Chicago area, the Newberry is easily accessible by bus and the “L” (subway). Detailed information about visiting the Newberry can be found [here](#).

The Newberry Library does not have a visitor parking lot. **Please consider all other means of transportation, rather than driving to the workshop.** Limited metered parking is available on area streets. Daytime and evening parking restrictions do apply, so be sure to read the posted signs carefully. Garage parking is also available in the neighborhood.

Participating faculty will make their own housing arrangements for the June 25-29, 2012 and June 26-28, 2013 meetings in Chicago. The Newberry has negotiated reduced rates at a number of nearby hotels for guests of the library. See the Newberry’s accommodations guide for rates and instructions when making reservations. For meals during your stay, the Newberry is within walking distance to restaurants of various styles in all price ranges, as well as several cafes and groceries for food throughout the week.

**Eligibility, Application, and Stipend**

Full-time faculty members, part-time lecturers, adjunct faculty, and administrators at American community colleges are eligible to participate. An applicant need not have an advanced degree in order to qualify. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline.
Applicants are to apply as a team of 2-4 faculty members, with the support of a sponsoring administrator. Applicants are also expected to participate throughout the project’s duration. A completed application (one application packet per team) will include:

1. A Newberry Cover Sheet for the entire team
2. An NEH Applicant/Participant Information Sheet for each member of the team, including the sponsoring administrator. (Applicants must complete the NEH Applicant/Participant Information Sheet to be considered eligible.)
3. A c.v. of no more than two pages for each team member, including the sponsoring administrator.
4. A completed essay of no more than 3 pages that explains
   a. The team’s interest in participating in the program, including shared research interests and issues related to your community college campus or system,
   b. how the program will impact humanities teaching both in your classrooms and across your campus or system, and
   c. A proposed research topic that draws on Newberry collections. Note: We anticipate you will spend some time exploring the Newberry’s resources to identify this theme or topic. For a full description of the Newberry’s holdings see our collection guides, the topical outline of our holdings in religion, and the library’s full online catalog.
5. Letter of support from the sponsoring administrator, who will attend a portion of the Summer 2013 meeting at the Newberry and help organize campus programming in Fall 2013. This letter can come from a department chair, dean, or provost, so long as the letter addresses (a) the project’s relevance to the campus or system, (b) support for the faculty team, and (c) the administrator’s ability and willingness to contribute to campus programming.

Faculty members will receive a $1500 stipend in summer 2012 and an additional $1500 stipend in summer 2013 for their participation.

Completed applications should be emailed as an attachment to scholl@newberry.org by March 23, 2012.

**Equal Opportunity Statement**
Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age. For further information, write to the NEH Equal Opportunity Office, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W., Washington, D.C., 20506. TDD: (202) 606-8282 (for the hearing impaired only).

We certainly hope you will apply for this challenging and stimulating program on America’s profound history of religious pluralism. Should you have any questions or inquiries about the program or the application process, please contact Chris Cantwell at cantwelle@newberry.org or (312) 255-3541.

Sincerely,

Daniel Greene
Vice President of Research and Academic Programs
Newberry Library

Chris Cantwell
Assistant Director, Scholl Center
Newberry Library

*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*